

CELEBRATING ISRAEL'S 56TH
ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE**HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the state of Israel on the celebration of its 56th anniversary of independence. Born out of the ashes of the Holocaust, Israel has blossomed into a dynamic and successful democracy. I urge all of my colleagues to pause and recognize this grand achievement.

Since their forced removal from the historic land of Israel by the Romans some 2,000 years ago, Jews have migrated the four corners of the earth. With the establishment of

the modern state of Israel, Jews once again found sovereignty and self-rule in the land of their forefathers.

The United States has a special relationship with Israel and her people, and it is right that we do. Israel, like the United States, values liberty, individual expression, and freedom of religion, assembly and the press. It too is a land of immigrants from continents as diverse as Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. We share basic values of freedom, a love of life, and a concern for our citizens' well-being. Israel also is a land of great innovation, home to great advancements in biosciences, agriculture and computer sciences to name a few. Israel's military and our own share resources and work together to achieve advances in defense technology that benefit both nations.

We all know that Israel finds itself beset by enemies sworn to its destruction, facing daily

acts of terrorism. We in Congress stand firmly behind Israel's security. Israel is a reality, and it is here to stay. The sooner Israel's neighbors accept this basic point, the sooner we will see progress toward peace.

Israel faces many great challenges, and solving them will take our active participation. The United States has a stake in the future of Israel and in the entire region, and we must not neglect our obligation to lead and the opportunity to respond. We should not dictate results, but should work always to create an environment that encourages dialogue.

Today is a day of celebration, one that marks the great achievements of Israel and her citizens these past 56 years. Like our own independence, Israel's comes at great cost. We all look forward to the day when Israel will celebrate its independence in peace.